LHCBA resolution improper, says AG

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE, Jan 1: Advocate-General Ashtar Ausaf Ali, who is also ex- officio chairman of the Punjab Bar Council, has described the proceedings and resolution of Thursday's general body meeting of the Lahore High Court Bar Association as 'highly improper and violative of the professional organization's mandate.'

Talking to *Dawn* on Friday, he said: " The Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act does not empower any Bar association or council to demand removal of judges. The conduct of judges is definitely outside the scope of professional organization of lawyers. Even the legislatures are barred from discussing the conduct of judges on the floor of the house."

Citing a Supreme Court judgment, the AG said even the misbehaviour of a judge did not justify a contemptuous report. He pointed out that the total membership of the LHCBA exceeded 7000, and if at all the LHCBA executive had decided to consider a lawyer's grievance

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against a judge, it should have given a proper and adequate notice of the matter to all its members. The issue was too important to be the subject of an ad hoc agenda and a hurriedly-called meeting of a few hundred LHCBA members, Mr Ali said.

The LHCBA, he added, should have exercized restraint after a high-level Bar delegation's meeting with the chief justice of Pakistan on Wednesday. There should have been proper appreciation of facts and, as in the past, the matter should have been referred to a committee. The resolution, as reported in the press, lacked balance and reflected poorly on its movers' sense of proportion, he added. Many of its contents were simply unworthy of consideration by an august organization like the LHCBA, the AG said.

Mr ALi hoped that the matter would be reconsidered by the LHCBA in a cool and dispassionate manner so that it could be resolved without further straining the Bar-Bench relations and kicking up more dust.

LEGAL NOTICE: Meanwhile, describing the LHCBA meeting and resolution as 'extremely irregular', Dr Abdul Basit has issued a legal notice to the LHCBA asking it to call a fresh meeting to reconsider the matter. He said the members did not have due notice of Thursday's meeting, effective steps were not taken to exclude unauthorized persons from participation in the meeting and 'votes were not counted by individual roll call.'

Describing Justice Ramday as a symbol of integrity, Dr Basit said he would be compelled to approach the high court against LHCBA if his demand was not accepted by it.